

Bleak year for student housing continues

by Paul Clark

Escalating rents and plunging vacancy rates have made this the bleakest year for Halifax student housing in recent memory. And more storm clouds loom mightily on the horizon.

"Without a doubt it's the worst year I've encountered since we opened," says Hilary Hambling, manager of Dalhousie Off-Campus Housing. "For example, we give students a list of rental agents with apartments. Very often they go down the list and do not find anything."

Halifax's vacancy rate for apartments with six or more units is 0.5% (0.2% near Dalhousie), according to Bruce Carveth, a housing analyst with the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Functionally, he says, there is

nothing at all: the fraction of apartments available to rent are usually priced out of the market or unsuitable for occupation.

Bachelor apartments now start at \$250 per month, ranging up to over \$350, while one bedroom apartments begin at \$350 with the sky the limit. Carveth says he knows of tenants paying over \$1,000 per month for an apartment.

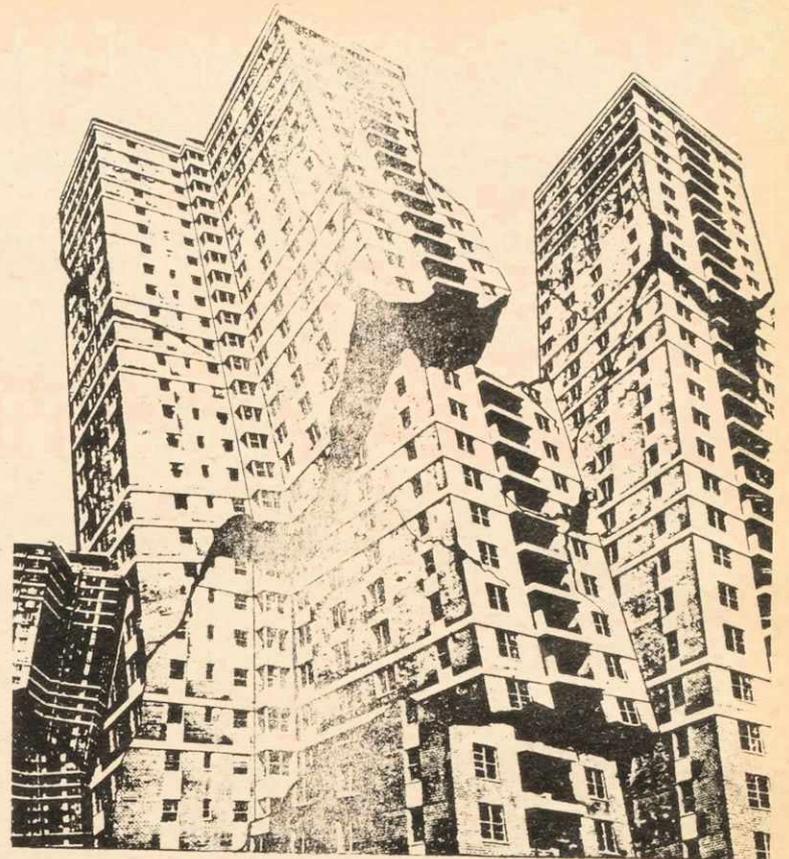
On the bright side, more and more homeowners are taking in students as boarders. Hambling says this kind of accommodation is plentiful and economical, although not available to everyone. For example, students who are married or living together common-law are seldom taken in as boarders. Single parents, not allowed in Peter Green Hall (apartments for married students) or in residence,

face particular problems.

On top of low vacancies and high rates, students are often subject to discrimination. The Nova Scotia Human Rights Act does not permit discrimination on the basis of race, religion or sex but says nothing about occupation. Consequently, a landlord can turn away a prospective tenant simply because he or she is a student. Just about everywhere, says Hambling, the unfortunate idea prevails that "students are the least desirable tenants".

Neither do things look well for on-campus housing. Of the 7072 students enrolled full-time at Dalhousie last year, 2327 stayed in the various forms of student accommodation offered by the university. This year over 230 students were on different waiting lists to be admitted to these places. Because the administration has said it is planning to sell some of its housing property at the end of the year to reduce its deficit, competition for the remaining

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Cleaners are switched from night to day shift

by Bruce Galloway

The night cleaning shift at Dalhousie received an unexpected Christmas "gift" from the administration last week. The thirty cleaners were informed that they would all be moved to the day shift, subsequently suffering a loss in pay.

The action by the administration and the complaints from the affected cleaners has prompted the Canadian Union of Public Employees (local 1392) to file a grievance with Dalhousie. However, local president Florence Logan refused to comment on the grievance pending word from the administration.

The elimination of the night shift was prompted by two motives explained Ray Ginsberg, Assistant to the Physical Plant, namely "money" and "efficiency." On the money side the move is just one in a series of actions that will see Dalhousie's cleaning budget reduced by \$300,000 during fiscal year 81-82.

"By changing the thirty cleaners to day shift," said Ginsberg, "the university will save approximately \$25,000 per year." The saving will be realized with the elimination of the 30 cents per hour difference in wages given to cleaners who work the night shift.

Although some cleaners like the change to daytime hours, most are upset, said a cleaner who works the SUB.

"There's no way you can get the work done," he said. Floors, vacuuming, and cleaning the offices, things that were formerly done at night when noone



Childer hose/Dal Photo

is around, are now made impossible with people walking over the floors as they are cleaned.

A \$25 a week decrease in pay is magnified by some who now have to find babysitting arrangements for their children, where formally the mother was working the night shift so that she could take care of the children during the day.

Cleaners interviewed in the Student Union Building questioned the suddenness of the announcement on December 23 of the change to take effect January 4th, at a time when noone was around to react. No consultation of the workers through a union meeting was arranged.

a high rate of absenteeism because of sickness," said Ginsberg. Also there was insufficient supervision to cover the wide range of buildings worked

by the cleaners at night.

Robbie Shaw, Vice-President in charge of finance, acknowledged that many people had complained about a lack of security in allowing cleaners to work at night but noted "the

whole thing has been blown out of proportion." Ginsberg firmly denied that security considerations had anything to do with the move by the administration.

The 30 cents per hour incentive was given to the night shift

in 1978 by the administration to encourage people to work what was considered an unpopular shift.

The elimination of the night shift will also improve efficiency in cleaning. "The night shift had

Space limitations in geology

by Heather Roseveare

Dalhousie's booming geology department is encountering limitations to its growth, according to an official in that department.

Nova Scotia's up-and-coming oil and gas industry is the primary reason why 115 students are presently enrolled in the first year class, compared to 75 last year, and five in 1960. The geology program has increased its program from three to four years, and now employs twelve professors rather than three as it did in 1960.

Geology professor Rebecca Jamieson feels the department is a victim of short-term planning. The department can no longer operate out of parts of two floors in the Dunn building that were originally allotted to them in 1950. Undergrad and grad students are now split between the Dunn building and the Life Sciences Centre. Twenty-nine students are crammed into labs ideally suited for twenty. Seminars and research labs are held in professors' offices.

Jamieson feels renovations to the existing floor space have been delayed as the administration doesn't have any money. What she would like to see is

the department contained in a single building, although "that won't happen until hell freezes over."

Jamieson feels "the students are suffering... the quality of education isn't what it should be."

Harley Hutchinson, a fourth year geology student and president of the Dawson Geological Club, was encouraged by last year's letter-writing campaign to Arts and Sciences dean, Donald Betts, that resulted in additional space for graduate students in the Old Archives building and money for microscopes. Hutchinson says the "department is certainly going downhill... I'm lucky this is my last year."

Chairman of the department, Dr. Schenk, reports that second year enrolment in the geology program will be restricted beginning next year to those

students holding a B- average or better in order to curb the problem. This means approximately half of the present first year students will have to find another field of study. "It wasn't an easy thing for the department to decide," Dr. Schenk said.

Geology isn't the only department binded by space. Physical and health sciences, as well as the education and political science departments, have all complained of space restrictions.

The administration is aware of the problem and is presently undertaking progressive action. Consultants have been hired to study the problem. Phase I, due next week, focuses on the Forrest Building of the faculty of health professions, while Phase II, not due until next May, concentrates on the Studley Campus.

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